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Committee on Sustainable Energy

Group of Experts on Renewable Energy

Fifth session
Kiev, 13–15 November 2018
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the fifth session

to be held in Kiev, starting at 9:00 on Tuesday, 13 November 2018

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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2018/1 – Annotated provisional agenda.

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item of the provisional agenda is the adoption of the agenda.

2. Election of officers

At in its fourth session in 2017, the Group of Experts elected representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, the Russian Federation and Serbia as Vice Chairs to serve for two years. Previously, at its third session in 2016, the Group of Experts elected the representative of Azerbaijan as its Chair and representatives from Belarus, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan and Ukraine as Vice Chairs for two years, and invited representatives from the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to participate in the Bureau for two years. The Group of Experts will be invited to elect members of the Bureau according to submitted nominations.

At the time of preparing this provisional agenda, nominations have been received from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The Bureau supports the continued participation of IEA, IRENA, REN21 and FAO representatives.

3. Tracking progress and exchange of experiences on how to increase the uptake of renewable energy

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2018/3 – Perspectives for renewable energy in the ECE region.

ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/3 – Renewable Energy Status Report 2017 - key findings: from bottlenecks to opportunities.

ECE/ENERGY/2018/1 – Pathways to sustainable energy – status report.

ECE/ENERGY/2016/7 – Pathways to sustainable energy – concept note.

Providing affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy remains a key challenge for the whole world, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region is no exception. While the countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia, Europe and North America are united in their goal of accelerating the development and implementation of renewable energy projects, the status and progress of market development is not homogenous across the region.

The German Energy Agency (dena) and ECE have collaborated to issue a report entitled "Status and perspectives for renewable energy development in the ECE Region 2017," featuring good practices and experiences of renewable energy policymaking (full report at https://shop.dena.de/fileadmin/denashop/media/Downloads_Dateien/erneuerbare/9251_Status_and_perspectives_for_renewable_energy_development_in_the_ECE_region.pdf).

At the policy level, this report takes a closer look at different policy options for promoting renewable energy adopted by ECE member countries, and at their current state of implementation and applicability. 43 countries have a premium plan or feed-in-remuneration in place, 44 countries provide subsidies or tax and investment incentives, 49 countries use renewable energy promotion schemes in the electricity sector, and 41

countries have policies directed at the heating sector. Overall, this shows that a number of promotion schemes are in place across the region, but ultimately the uptake of renewable energy depends on market access and the effective implementation of these schemes. The report considered the outcome of ECE Renewable Energy Hard Talks held in Georgia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan in 2016 and 2017. These multi-stakeholder policy dialogues show that given the variance of policy structures and differing stages of renewable energy deployment in national energy systems, there is no single policy that guarantees a substantial increase in the uptake of renewable energy. Even if renewable energy policies are in place, they do not necessarily boost renewable energy investment.

The ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2017, produced jointly with REN21, shows that renewable energy investments have declined in recent years in South East and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (2015 and 2017 editions are available at: https://www.unece.org/energywelcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-renewable-energy-status-report.html). The 17 considered countries of the ECE region represented 0.2% of global renewable energy investment in 2015 or USD 0.4 billion, compared to the USD 0.7 billion invested in 2014, or 0.5% of global renewable energy investments, showing a downward trend in contrast to trends globally. These countries are home to more than 300 million people and represent 4.9% of the world's GDP, yet lag in global renewable energy development, both technically and financially, despite significant untapped renewable energy potential. These are the critical findings of the REN21 ECE Renewable Energy Status Report 2017.

Delegates will be invited to exchange experiences, good practices and discuss implications for the Group of Experts and the ECE region. In particular, how to tackle obstacles and bottlenecks, take advantage of existing opportunities and exploit untapped potential.

The IEA, IRENA, REN21 and other relevant organizations are invited to contribute to dedicated discussions on the progress made in the renewable energy development of the ECE region. Within the forum, the IEA will lead a discussion on the role of bioenergy, in light of changes to the energy landscape. Within this context, the Group of Experts will benefit from the key findings of the IEA publication launched a few weeks prior entitled Renewables 2018. IRENA will lead a specific session on renewable energy prospects in Central and South East Europe. The Group of Experts will be requested to exchange views relating to IRENA's ongoing efforts to identify cost-effective renewable energy options for the region, spanning a wide range of sectors and technologies.

With a view to accelerate the transition to a sustainable energy system, the Group of Experts will organize a session in the context of the ECE flagship project "Pathways to Sustainable Energy" (for more details about the project, please refer to unece.org/energy/pathwaystose.html). The Group of Experts will explore the results and implications of various sustainable energy scenarios from the perspective of renewable energy. The discussion will allow experts to contribute to the policy options that form the basis for the formulation of adaptive policy pathways and provide inputs to the modelling team.

4. Hard Talks and opportunities to support renewable energy investments

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2018/4 – Implementation of renewable energy national action plans in selected ECE countries.

Most ECE member States have defined quantitative goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, many countries lag behind in terms of reaching specific targets, including those for renewable energy, within the agreed timeframes. Attracting investment is a major challenge in some of these countries, even with the existence of support schemes and policies aimed at the advancement of renewable energy. Therefore, the Group of Experts is invited to pay special attention to key issues and prioritize discussions focusing

on overcoming obstacles to renewable energy uptake and boosting renewable energy investment in the region.

Delegates will be invited to discuss the relationship between policy measures and market conditions in the process of increasing renewable energy investments, while also sharing successful experiences stemming from previous ECE Hard Talks. These discussions will enhance the success of future planned Renewable Energy Hard Talks for the ECE region and improve the relationships between regional renewable energy stakeholders (see more at: https://www.unece.org/energywelcome/areas-of-work/renewable-energy/unece-ren21-hard-talks.html). The Hard Talks offer the opportunity to discuss recommendations for policy changes required to overcome political, legal, regulatory and technical barriers while taking advantage of untapped renewable energy potential. In this context, delegates will be invited to share successful practices to develop and implement policies and measures. Delegates may also convey preliminary expressions of interest to organize Hard Talks in their countries.

As a continuation of last year's matchmaking event, a specific session will bolster the exchange of information among major stakeholders to tackle key investment issues and how to link it to measures to reduce energy poverty. This is in line with the work started at the Seventh International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development and the Third session of the Group of Experts (Baku, Azerbaijan, 20-21 October 2016), and a follow-up to dedicated sessions and bilateral meetings to facilitate the matching of project developers with investors and policy makers that were jointly organized by the ECE and the EU Technical Assistance Facility at the Eighth International Forum on Energy for Sustainable Development (Astana, Kazakhstan, 13-14 June 2017).

IRENA will actively contribute to the event by presenting various IRENA tools to promote renewable energy investments, including the Sustainable Energy Marketplace, an online platform that facilitates financing of RE projects. These tools are available for ECE member States to accelerate the scaling-up of public and private investments through a pipeline of renewable energy projects.

5. Cross-cutting and inter-sectoral cooperation to integrate renewable energy into energy systems

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2017/5 – Benefits of transboundary cooperation in water-energy nexus for renewable energy development.

The goal of increased renewable energy uptake for ECE countries requires an integrated approach and multi-stakeholder dialogue to achieve higher renewable energy shares within future energy systems. This includes an improved understanding of renewable energy resource characteristics and availability, while increasing investments in enabling infrastructure. Additionally, policy, institutional, normative and regulatory frameworks must be strengthened. Delegates will be requested to present their experience and views on how to better integrate renewable energy into energy systems. Aspects of interlinkages with fossil fuels are important in this context, particularly natural gas and cleaner electricity production.

Renewable energy plays a strong role in helping to achieve better management of resources within the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus. The potential role of renewable energy in promoting the nexus approach will be specifically explored, as well as links to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implications for climate change mitigation. The nexus approach presents an opportunity to strengthen actions aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates will be invited to consider an integrated and holistic approach in the deployment of renewable energy and to discuss the implementation of possible joint inter-sectoral work. This will include future project

development and how to benefit from future Renewable Energy Hard Talks foreseen in South East Europe which will include a water-energy nexus perspective.

Overall, delegates will be invited to exchange views on the opportunities that can arise from cross-cutting activities through broader financing opportunities, new partnerships, reinforced sustainability, wider support and acceptability, as well as reduced risks.

6. Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy

Documentation: ECE/ENERGY/GE.6/2018/5–ECE/ENERGY/GE.7/2018/5
Regulatory and policy dialogue addressing barriers to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy.

A number of legislative, policy, economic, and financial barriers to significant improvements in energy efficiency and increased uptake of renewable energy remain. It is important to identify policies and measures in the ECE region that reduce barriers to increasing investment and financing flows to energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, with an emphasis on commercial projects and private financing. A valuable aspect is transferability of successful measures in considered countries to other ECE member States. Particular attention needs to be given to the reasons why energy efficiency improvement and uptake of renewable energy are lagging behind what is necessary to achieve climate goals and sustainable development goals.

Findings from the study of considered ECE member States from South East Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia sub-regions will be presented. The study aims at identifying and analyzing policy, regulatory and institutional reforms; capacity of stakeholders in the countries (national and local authorities, project developers and owners, and financial institutions); best practices developed and introduced; and awareness raising. It also looks at the processes in the area of energy efficiency and renewable energy at the international and national levels, which are particularly beneficial for the countries and which can be recommended for replication and scaling up. It also highlights existing gaps in the countries of the region related to energy efficiency and renewable energy in the areas of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks, financial environment, and education and awareness.

Delegates will be invited to discuss the outcomes of the study, policies and actions that increase financing of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, and propose next steps for renewable energy and energy efficiency finance options in the region.

7. Other business

At the time the provisional agenda was prepared, there were no issues to be raised under this item.

8. Dates of the next meeting

The sixth session of the Group of Experts on Renewable Energy is scheduled to take place in Geneva on 10–11 October 2019.

9. Report of the meeting

The Chair of the Group of Experts and the secretariat will draft the report of the session, including conclusions and recommendations, for discussion and approval by the delegates.